



HAWAII PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Survey of Military Families
2004



U.S. Pacific Command

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The USPACOM Hawaii School Study was initiated in 2002 to assess military families' experiences with and perceptions of Hawaii Public Schools (HPS). Challenged by negative perceptions of Hawaii's schools among incoming military families, the USPACOM initiated a research effort to determine parents' and students' current levels of satisfaction with the schools. Additionally, student performance data were also analyzed to provide an objective benchmark for progress.

The Strategic Research Group (SRG) was contracted to conduct the third wave of the survey in 2004. The objectives of this survey were to assess satisfaction with Hawaii Public Schools (HPS) in general and in key areas among three groups: parents, students in grades 9-12, and students in grades 5-8. To this end, questionnaires were sent to all active duty military parents of children attending the HPS system and students of military members in grades 5 through 12. A total of 35% of the parents, 24% of the students in grades 5-8 and 23% of the students in grades 9-12 took advantage of the opportunity to provide their opinions regarding their school.



GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF HPS

Parents were asked several questions regarding their overall opinion of HPS.

- Overall, parents tended to be divided in terms of their satisfaction with the schools. Approximately 38% were satisfied or very satisfied, but an equal proportion—38% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- Next, parents were asked about their expectations regarding HPS. Specifically, they were asked about their perceptions of the schools prior to enrolling their children. Nearly half—47%—had a negative or very negative impression of HPS prior to enrollment.
- After asking about impressions prior to enrollment, parents were asked how, if at all, their perceptions of the school had changed. Despite negative initial expectations, a full 46% indicated that their current impressions of HPS were slightly or much better.

ACHIEVEMENT TEST DATA ANALYSIS (SAT-9)

The SAT-9 is an abbreviated version of the Stanford Achievement Test, consisting of 30 reading questions and 30 math questions. Student achievement data in 44 military-impacted schools were compared to national norms. Students in grades 3, 5, and 8 performed above national norms in both reading and math. Students in grade 10, however performed at levels slightly below national norms in terms of reading but performance was similar to national norms in math.

Analysis of the scores by school revealed some important differences from national norms in both reading and math. In terms of reading, 17 schools exhibited performance that was significantly higher than national norms. Still, there were three high schools and two middle schools for which scores were slightly below national norms. Math score performance, however, was uniformly strong; there were 25 schools in which students performed at levels significantly above national norms.

It is impossible to determine precisely why these differences exist, but, contrary to the concerns expressed by military families in previous years' surveys, it does not seem to be the case that military students in the HPS perform at



systematically lower levels than would be expected compared to national norms; in fact, the results are quite the opposite. In terms of standardized testing, students in the HPS performed at or above levels to be expected based on national norms in 2003-2004.

2004 ITEM RESPONSES

There was high agreement with most items, indicating that HPS provide a good learning environment for students. The following are some specific findings for parents and students in 2004.

PARENTS

Over 50% of Parents either agree or strongly agree with all items except:

- School has made positive changes in the last year (48%).
- Textbooks are adequate, up-to-date, and relevant (47%).

Over 70% of Parents either agree or strongly agree with the following:

- Students are able to learn at school (87%).
- Teachers care about students (79%).
- Students feel safe at school (79%).
- Students feel welcome at school (77%).
- School provides information about student progress (72%).

STUDENTS GRADE 9-12

Over 50% of students in grades 9-12 either agree or strongly agree with all items except:

- Students treat each other with respect (41%).

Over 70% of students in grades 9-12 either agree or strongly agree with the following:

- Students are able to learn at school (88%).
- Students receive adequate help (76%).
- School provides information about student progress (75%).
- Adequate access to computers and technology (74%).
- Teachers care about students (73%).
- Students learn critical thinking (72%).
- Students are learning grade-appropriate information (71%).

STUDENTS GRADE 5-8

Students in grades 5-8 were mostly pleased with their educational experience at HPS. There were no items that were rated less than 50% agreement. Over 70% of students in grades 5-8 either agree or strongly agree with the following:

- Students are able to learn at school (94%).
- School provides information about student progress (86%).
- Teachers are well trained (85%).
- Students receive adequate help (84%).
- Teachers care about students (82%).
- Students learn critical thinking (79%).
- Assignments are meaningful and challenging (78%).
- Students are learning grade-appropriate information (77%).
- School has adequate facilities (75%).
- School has created a good learning environment (73%).
- Adequate access to computers and technology (71%).

TRENDS OVER TIME

Overall, attitudes and impressions are slowly growing more favorable. However, progress is slow in several key areas. The trend analysis reveals slow but steady increases in many areas, especially the following:

- Student is able to learn at school
- Teachers care about students
- Assignments are meaningful and challenging
- Students receive adequate help to learn
- Access to computers and technology is adequate
- I would recommend this school to others

However, several items show no evidence of improvement and possibly a downward trend:

- School is clean and well-maintained
- Administrators care about students
- Students treat each other with respect
- School creates a good learning environment

These items should be monitored in future surveys and should not be changed to observe the effects of initiatives aimed at these issues over time.



TABLE 1

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 I learn at school	2002	25	54	12	7	1
	2003	28	60	7	4	0
	2004	34	60	5	1	1
GRADES 9-12 I am able to learn at school	2002	18	57	13	10	1
	2003	15	65	12	6	0
	2004	22	66	9	3	0
PARENTS My child is able to learn at school	2002	22	60	12	5	0
	2003	22	65	9	4	0
	2004	18	69	9	3	1

TABLE 2

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My school deals with misbehavior problems fairly and immediately	2002	17	42	23	12	3
	2003	17	49	20	9	4
	2004	19	49	21	8	4
GRADES 9-12 My school resolves disciplinary issues fairly and in a timely manner	2002	10	39	24	18	8
	2003	9	51	21	12	7
	2004	11	52	21	9	8
PARENTS My child's school resolves disciplinary issues in a fair and timely manner	2002	12	44	17	10	16
	2003	14	52	13	7	13
	2004	12	51	16	9	12

TABLE 2 NOTE: THE QUESTION WAS WORDED SLIGHTLY DIFFERENTLY IN 2002 AND 2003. CAUTION IS NEEDED IN MAKING COMPARISONS ACROSS THESE YEARS.

TABLE 3

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My textbooks are adequate, up to date, and help me to learn	2002	14	43	23	18	1
	2003	17	50	18	12	2
	2004	15	46	23	11	5
GRADES 9-12 My textbooks are adequate, up to date, and help me to learn	2002	11	38	29	21	1
	2003	8	51	27	13	0
	2004	8	44	33	12	3
PARENTS The textbooks in my child's class(es) are adequate in number, relevant, and up to date.	2002	10	43	23	18	4
	2003	8	49	23	14	4
	2004	7	40	28	18	7

TABLE 3 NOTE: THE QUESTION WAS WORDED SLIGHTLY DIFFERENTLY IN 2002 AND 2003. THE TEXT "UP TO DATE" WAS ADDED IN 2004. CAUTION IS NEEDED IN MAKING COMPARISONS ACROSS THESE YEARS.

TABLE 4

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My teachers care about me	2002	28	45	12	10	4
	2003	31	50	11	4	3
	2004	35	47	9	4	6
GRADES 9-12 My teachers care about me	2002	16	44	21	15	3
	2003	12	58	19	8	4
	2004	17	56	13	6	10
PARENTS My child's teachers care about him/her	2002	28	46	14	8	3
	2003	29	50	12	6	2
	2004	26	53	12	5	4

TABLE 5

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My teachers help me learn how to think	2002	22	48	19	9	1
	2003	28	52	14	4	2
	2004	26	53	14	4	4
GRADES 9-12 My teachers help us learn thinking skills at school	2002	14	44	25	12	3
	2003	10	57	21	9	2
	2004	14	58	18	5	5
PARENTS My child learns critical thinking skills at school	2002	14	53	22	7	3
	2003	14	60	17	5	3
	2004	14	55	21	6	5

TABLE 3 NOTE: THE QUESTION WAS WORDED SLIGHTLY DIFFERENTLY IN 2002 AND 2003. THE PREVIOUS QUESTION USED THE TERM "PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS" INSTEAD OF "THINKING SKILLS." CAUTION IS NEEDED IN MAKING COMPARISONS ACROSS THESE YEARS.

TABLE 6

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 People who work in my school care about me	2002	19	44	18	12	6
	2003	17	55	15	5	7
	2004	20	46	15	5	14
GRADES 9-12 The staff in my school care about me	2002	10	38	27	17	7
	2003	8	52	22	10	8
	2004	10	45	21	8	17
PARENTS My child's administrators care about him/her	2002	15	47	17	10	9
	2003	17	53	14	7	8
	2004	14	48	15	10	13

TABLE 7

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My teachers know each subject they teach	2002	29	48	13	7	2
	2003	32	50	9	4	3
	2004	35	50	9	2	4
GRADES 9-12 My teachers are well-trained to teach each subject	2002	13	37	29	17	3
	2003	9	50	25	11	5
	2004	12	51	23	8	6
PARENTS My child's teachers are well-trained to teach	2002	17	46	19	9	8
	2003	19	49	17	6	8
	2004	18	46	17	6	14

TABLE 8

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 We treat everyone with respect at my school	2002	14	35	29	18	2
	2003	6	41	30	19	3
	2004	13	43	26	14	4
GRADES 9-12 The students in my school treat each other with respect	2002	6	34	33	25	2
	2003	3	38	33	23	3
	2004	3	38	35	21	4
PARENTS My child feels that students treat each other with respect	2002	11	44	26	15	3
	2003	10	49	25	12	3
	2004	8	47	24	13	8

TABLE 9

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 I feel welcomed at my school	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2004	22	51	16	6	4
GRADES 9-12 I feel welcomed at my school	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2004	11	58	18	9	4
PARENTS My child has felt welcomed to his/her school	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2004	17	60	14	6	4

TABLE 10

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My school is a safe place	2002	17	47	20	12	3
	2003	19	55	15	9	2
	2004	18	49	20	7	6
GRADES 9-12 My school provides a safe environment	2002	9	49	21	20	1
	2003	10	56	21	10	2
	2004	10	56	22	9	4
PARENTS My child feels safe at school	2002	18	60	13	7	1
	2003	19	62	12	6	1
	2004	18	61	13	6	3

TABLE 11

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My school is clean	2002	12	39	28	18	1
	2003	11	48	23	15	2
	2004	13	43	31	12	2
GRADES 9-12 My school is clean and well-maintained	2002	8	33	31	25	1
	2003	6	43	32	17	2
	2004	10	41	35	11	3
PARENTS My child's school is clean and well-maintained	2002	14	46	24	14	1
	2003	13	54	21	10	1
	2004	14	52	23	9	2

TABLE 12

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My teachers give me meaningful and challenging assignments	2002	17	45	25	10	1
	2003	21	49	20	7	2
	2004	22	56	15	4	2
GRADES 9-12 My teachers give me meaningful and challenging assignments	2002	10	44	30	14	1
	2003	8	53	28	10	1
	2004	11	53	26	7	2
PARENTS My child's teachers give meaningful and challenging assignments	2002	13	46	28	12	1
	2003	13	50	25	10	1
	2004	12	53	23	10	2

TABLE 13

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My teachers give me help when I need it	2002	24	50	16	7	1
	2003	26	54	13	4	1
	2004	32	52	12	3	1
GRADES 9-12 My teachers provided me with the help I need to learn at school	2002	13	52	20	13	1
	2003	11	58	22	7	2
	2004	16	60	18	6	2
PARENTS My child receives adequate help to learn at school	2002	13	49	23	10	3
	2003	14	52	23	8	2
	2004	13	55	19	8	4

TABLE 14

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My teachers let me know how I am doing in school	2002	28	49	13	6	2
	2003	27	54	10	6	2
	2004	31	55	10	3	0
GRADES 9-12 My teachers provide me with the information I need to determine my academic progress	2002	19	49	21	10	0
	2003	10	57	21	8	3
	2004	12	63	17	5	3
PARENTS My child's school provides me with adequate information about his/her academic progress	2002	17	57	18	6	1
	2003	18	51	20	9	0
	2004	18	54	18	9	1

TABLE 15

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 My school's environment promotes learning	2002	15	43	24	13	3
	2003	24	56	11	4	4
	2004	18	55	17	4	7
GRADES 9-12 My school's environment promotes good learning	2002	11	39	27	20	2
	2003	9	57	22	8	3
	2004	8	56	26	6	5
PARENTS My child's school's has created a good learning environment	2002	13	44	27	14	2
	2003	15	56	19	6	2
	2004	12	53	22	9	4

TABLE 16

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 I can use the computers at school when I need to	2002	17	34	28	16	3
	2003	18	42	26	9	4
	2004	25	46	20	6	3
GRADES 9-12 I have adequate access to computers and other technology at school	2002	16	36	24	22	1
	2003	15	43	26	13	2
	2004	19	55	19	5	2
PARENTS My child has adequate access to computers and other technology at school	2002	11	35	28	18	8
	2003	9	39	30	13	8
	2004	12	47	23	9	9

TABLE 17

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 The information I am learning in school makes me feel ready to move up to the next grade	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2004	29	48	16	5	2
GRADES 9-12 The information I am learning in school makes me feel ready to move up to the next grade or graduate	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2004	17	54	18	5	5
PARENTS My child is learning grade-appropriate information	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2004	12	53	22	9	5

TABLE 18

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 The facilities at my school (like classrooms, gym, or library) are acceptable	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2004	22	53	16	6	3
GRADES 9-12 The facilities at my school (like classrooms, gym, or library) are acceptable	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2004	13	55	21	8	3
PARENTS The facilities at my child's school are adequate	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2004	10	49	27	11	4

TABLE 19

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 I would recommend this school to my friends	2002	17	35	19	24	3
	2003	17	40	22	15	6
	2004	20	41	20	13	6
GRADES 9-12 I would recommend this school to a friend	2002	15	28	20	34	3
	2003	13	36	23	21	5
	2004	16	39	20	13	12
PARENTS I would recommend this school to others	2002	15	35	21	24	4
	2003	14	43	20	16	5
	2004	15	43	18	16	10

TABLE 20

Response rate for each item in %. <i>Rounded to the nearest whole number.</i>	YEAR	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE
GRADES 5-8 This school has made positive changes over the last year	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	17	36	21	10	15
	2004	17	37	19	10	16
GRADES 9-12 This school has made positive changes over the last year	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	12	36	23	11	17
	2004	14	41	19	12	14
PARENTS This school has made positive changes over the last year	2002	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2003	10	33	20	10	26
	2004	11	37	20	12	21

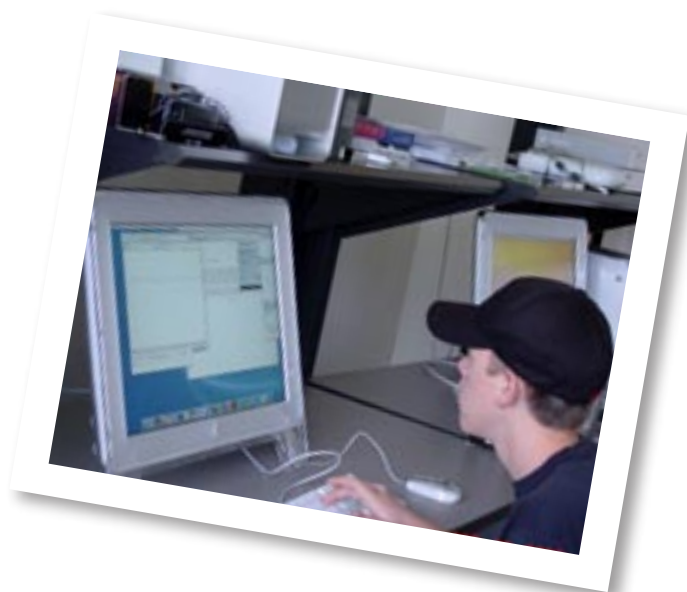
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, military families' attitudes and impressions of the HPS are growing more favorable. Examining the three years of survey results shows slow but steady increases in many important areas. Some of the areas with little or no progress, particularly "respect" and creating a "good learning environment," seem to suggest a continuing focus on integrating military children into the schools is necessary. To this end, the JVEF's efforts to smooth transitions for military families in and out of the HPS can help to resolve these issues.

Analysis of school-level data suggests that the schools most sensitive to and accommodating of diversity among students create the most positive environments for the students and their parents. Schools doing well at accommodating the unique needs of special populations (such as special education or students with limited English proficiency) seem to generate more favorable ratings of the schools overall. Perhaps a closer look at these schools' successes may generate best practices for other schools in Hawaii.

School-level analysis also indicated that respondents with longer service in Hawaii tended to rate the schools more favorably. Longer service may permit greater adjustment and integration into the community. If this is the case, then strategies focused on smoothing transitions in and out of HPS are especially important. Continuing to grow and emphasize programs like the JVEF's Military Culture Course for teachers and "Aloha Military Families and Students" program are likely to have a positive impact. These programs also provide additional ways for stakeholders to communicate and share feedback, another way to improve satisfaction with the schools.

Negative expectations about HPS seem to persist, but contrary to these expectations it does not seem to be the case that military students in the HPS perform at systematically lower levels than would be expected compared to national norms; in fact, the results are quite the opposite. According to an analysis of standardized test data, no military impacted school performed significantly below national norms. Military dependent students in the HPS performed at or above levels to be expected based on national norms in 2003-2004.





For Additional Information



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